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EXCHANGE  
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# The University of Minnesota

CURRENT PROBLEMS

NUMBER 2

## RURAL TEACHERS' TRAINING DEPART- MENTS IN MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOLS

BY

BENJAMIN FLOYD PITTENGER, M.A.

Instructor in Education in the University of Minnesota



MINNEAPOLIS  
Bulletin of the University of Minnesota  
October 1914

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# RURAL TEACHERS' TRAINING DEPARTMENTS IN MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOLS

## I. INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The rural-school problem is one of the most urgent problems confronting American educators to-day. In the first place it concerns the majority of our people. Monahan<sup>1</sup> states that in 1910 rural communities furnished 53.7 per cent of our total population, 58.5 per cent of our school population, and 62.3 per cent of our total school enrollment. The State of Minnesota showed corresponding percentages of 59, 64.8, and 69, respectively.<sup>2</sup> In the second place developments in rural education have not kept pace with educational developments elsewhere. "Public schools, both urban and rural, have made considerable progress, but the marked progress has been confined almost wholly to the city and town. . . . it is generally true for the United States as a whole, that rural schools lack intelligent and economical management, adequate supervision and efficient teaching."<sup>3</sup>

The heart of the rural-school problem is the preparation of the country teacher. "The country school will not reach the position of efficiency that belongs to it until a distinctive preparation is required of its teacher."<sup>4</sup> "At least three basic reasons may be offered in advocating the special training of country teachers. (1) The peculiarities of the ungraded school afford numerous characteristic difficulties in the way of management, administration, and teaching. (2) The adaptation of the subject matter to the experience of country children requires special attention. (3) The sociological conditions of the country

<sup>1</sup> Monahan, A. C., *Status of Rural Education in the United States*. Bul. U. S. Bureau of Education, 1913, No. 8, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17 and 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Mutchler, F., and Craig, W. J., *Course of Study for the Preparation of Rural School Teachers*. Bul. U. S. Bureau of Education, 1912, No. 1, p. 8.

differ from those of the city and demand special study on the part of teachers who are to work in rural localities." <sup>5</sup> The abundant literature recently published on rural education seems to agree in making something like the following demands upon the ideal country teacher:

(1) Knowledge of subject matter, of the various common branches and industrial subjects. But it must be such a knowledge of these materials as will enable her to present them in the light of a country child's peculiar experience and a country man's or woman's future needs.

(2) Ability to meet directly the pedagogical problems of the situation. This ability presupposes a course in practice teaching which is organized to illustrate and solve the special problems presented by rural schools.

(3) Understanding of, and sympathy with, country life. A certain amount of country-life experience is highly desirable for the country teacher, but it must have awakened and not stifled her enthusiasm for that life.

(4) Particular acquaintance with modern movements looking toward country-life improvement, and knowledge of the corresponding functions of the rural school.

(5) Such a faith in the country and the country school as will lead her to make of rural teaching a real profession, and not a stepping-stone to a graded school and village society.

This study attempts to ascertain to what degree the Minnesota plan for the preparation of rural teachers meets these demands.

#### THE MINNESOTA PLAN FOR THE TRAINING OF RURAL TEACHERS

*Description.*—The chief means in Minnesota for the training of rural teachers is the training departments maintained in about one half of our high schools. One hundred and eight of these departments were in operation during the past year. They are given state aid to the amount of \$1,000 each, and are under the general control of the High School Board, which formulates the rules under which they operate and which now provides a special inspector for their supervision. Each department is in the charge

<sup>5</sup> Carney, Mabel, *Country Life and the Country School* (1912), pp. 253-4.

of a special teacher or training supervisor, and offers one full year of training to those high-school students, preferably seniors, who propose to teach in rural schools.

Country teachers are at present largely ignored by our state teachers' training institutions. The University of Minnesota offered its first course in rural education in the spring of 1914. Of the state normal schools two report "no work whatever," two report only a course in Rural Sociology, and one reports Rural Sociology and Rural School Methods. The state agricultural schools are showing a clearer appreciation of the needs of rural education. A full-year course for country teachers is announced at Crookston for 1914-15, while Morris expects to extend its present summer course into a year course in the near future. But at present, and probably for a long time to come, the real responsibility for the training of rural teachers in Minnesota rests, and will continue to rest, upon the high-school normal training departments.

*Historical sketch.*—In 1903 the legislature of Minnesota passed an enactment providing annual state aid to the amount of \$750 for "each high school having a four-year course, and organized classes in each of the four grades therein, which shall provide for special normal instruction in the common branches."<sup>6</sup> This act virtually created the high-school training departments. For several years previous a few high schools had offered instruction in the common branches, but attendance had been uncertain and the work had been discontinued in many places. The response to this stimulative enactment was very slow. We are told that before 1906 the majority of our country teachers secured their only professional training through summer training schools and institutes.<sup>7</sup> In 1907-8 only ten departments were reported, with 182 students in 1907 and 233 in 1908.<sup>8</sup> Prospects in 1908 seem to have been discouraging, for the high-school inspector wrote: "Work in these departments shows no new tendencies, the attendance is small. . . . unless there is a radical change there is little hope that they will multiply and supply rural teachers for the state at large."<sup>9</sup> But this change had evidently come in 1910, when the state superintendent wrote:

<sup>6</sup> *Revised Laws of Minnesota, 1905, Sec. 1420.*

<sup>7</sup> *Report of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1904, p. 17.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid., 1907-8.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid., p. 197.*

"No part of our state plan for providing trained teachers, especially for rural schools, has made more rapid or gratifying progress during the period of this report than the high school departments for the training of rural teachers."<sup>10</sup> The high-school inspector reported twenty-seven departments for the same year, and published the first list of rules for their direction. The name "training departments" was also given at this time.<sup>11</sup> The enrollment was stated as 489.<sup>12</sup>

Growth was rapid during 1911 and 1912. In 1911 fifty-six departments and 740 students were reported; in 1912 eighty-one departments and 1,018 students.<sup>13</sup> A slight decline occurred in the school year 1912-13, when there were only eighty departments and 979 students.<sup>14</sup> But in 1913 a new impetus was given to the work by a legislative provision increasing the amount of state aid to \$1,000.<sup>15</sup> The result was a sudden increase in the number of the departments, 108 being announced at the beginning of the last school year.<sup>16</sup>

*Official status.*—The following quotation from the report of the state superintendent of public instruction for 1911-12 (pp. 24-6) is offered as an indication of the importance with which these departments are officially regarded. "The surest and most direct way of obtaining better schools is to provide them with better teachers. Real progress has been made in the high and graded schools. . . . The prospects in rural schools are not so encouraging. . . . Take it all in all, less than one-fourth of our nine thousand country teachers have received any professional preparation for their work. . . . To provide trained teachers for all rural schools would necessitate an enlargement of the present facilities for training. . . . The most economical and expedient course would be to add to the number and increase the efficiency of the high school training departments. We have 211 high schools. If 150 of them maintained strong training departments the result would be an annual output of from 1,500 to 2,000 teachers, which, with the number annually

<sup>10</sup> *Report of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1909-10*, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 221-4, 235.

<sup>12</sup> *Report State High School Inspector, 1913*, p. 61.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *General Statutes of Minnesota, 1913*, Sec. 2937.

<sup>16</sup> *Educational Directory of Minnesota, 1913-14*.

graduated from the normal schools, would very nearly make up for the annual withdrawals from the teaching ranks."

## II. SOME TENDENCIES IN THE DEPARTMENTS

The following discussion is the outgrowth of a study conducted by the writer during the school year of 1913-14. Personal visits were made to more than a score of the departments, and a questionnaire relating to problems raised during this visitation was formulated and sent to all of the training supervisors in the State. A copy of the questionnaire is appended to this report. Replies were received from 98 out of the 108 training teachers consulted. Of these, three are not included in the analysis, one being very incomplete, and one having to do with the training of grade teachers only, while the third was received after the study had been completed.

In the discussion of results it has seemed best to adopt a different arrangement from that of the original questionnaire, in order to secure a more logical sequence, and to assemble the data around a few fundamental propositions.

### CONCERNING THE COURSE OF STUDY

*Problem.*—Are the courses of study in the different departments fairly uniform throughout the State? If not, is the diversity probably due to attempts at local rural adaptation, or to mere accident or caprice?

*Rules of the High School Board.*—The following subjects are required: American history, arithmetic, civics, geography, grammar, children's literature, reading and writing; but "not all can be taken up systematically" and "no fixed course can be prescribed." It "should be adapted to local communities" and "emphasis should be placed on such subjects, and on such phases of each subject, as may seem most serviceable in building up the rural schools of the community."<sup>17</sup>

*Data from the questionnaire.*—In the assembling of the data relative to the course of study the divisions suggested in the questionnaire can not be followed. Very few teachers seemed able

<sup>17</sup> *High School Board Rules*, Minnesota Department of Education, Bul. No. 45, p. 17.

to distinguish sharply between "special subjects reviewed" and "other work required." All that can be done is to state the more important kinds of subject matter mentioned and the number of schools making mention of each. Ninety-five schools reported.

Subject	Number of schools teaching subject	Subject	Number of schools teaching subject
History .....	91	Seat Work .....	14
Arithmetic .....	91	Chart Making .....	12
Grammar .....	89	Calisthenics .....	6
Geography .....	87	Current Events .....	5
Civics .....	66	Nature Study .....	5
English Composition .....	60	Phonics .....	4
Physiology and Hygiene.....	60	Story-telling .....	4
Spelling .....	53	Play-ground Activities .....	4
Writing .....	53	Art .....	4
Agriculture .....	47	Rural Problems .....	3
Reading .....	40	Sanitation .....	3
Drawing .....	32	Hot-lunch Demonstrations ..	3
Domestic Science .....	31	Scrap-book Making .....	2
Music .....	31	School Law .....	2
Manual Training .....	25	Dramatization .....	2
Construction .....	24	Community Clubs .....	1
Methods .....	21	Elocution .....	1
Children's Literature .....	19	Gardening .....	1
Sewing .....	16	History of Education .....	1
School Management .....	14		

In addition to the above, four teachers reply that they teach "all the common branches."

*Discussion.*—That there is no great uniformity existing among these courses of study is perfectly clear. Only arithmetic and history are mentioned or implied in every list, although geography and grammar are omitted from very few. These subjects afford a backbone of continuity. On the other hand, several of the subjects stipulated by the High School Board are not mentioned by many schools. Civics, English composition, and physiology and hygiene are omitted in fully a third of the reports; spelling, writing, and reading are even less frequently described. As to the remaining subject matter, the greatest variety prevails.

It is not so clear how far the different courses show adaptation to rural needs, nor how far they are determined by the personal predilections of the training teachers. Subjects like history of

education, elocution, dramatization, and scrap-book manufacture suggest personal idiosyncrasies. Others of the subjects, however, show a clear appreciation of the peculiar demands of rural schools. Among these are play-ground activities, rural problems, sanitation, gardening, hot-lunch demonstrations, and community clubs. But these and similar subjects, which should be prominent in every course, are actually found in very few. In general it appears that both the tastes of the training supervisors and the local conditions under which they work are responsible for the great variety of subject matter, but that the first factor predominates.

CONCERNING THE RURAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE OF THE STUDENT TEACHERS

*Problem.*—Do the student teachers in these departments possess sufficient rural experience to appreciate the differences between the common and the graded school, and between the demands of country and village or city life?

*Data from the questionnaire.*—(a) Experience as pupils in rural schools, reported for 821 out of the 1,029 students included in the study.

Experience	Number of students	Percentage of those reporting
None .....	444	54
Less than a year.....	11	8½
One year .....	29	
Two years .....	14	
Three years .....	16	
Four years .....	21	36
Five years .....	17	
Six years .....	40	
Seven years .....	94	
Eight years .....	116	1½
More than eight .....	8	
Indefinite .....	11	

From this table it appears that of the group reporting 54 per cent have never attended a rural school, and that another 8½ per cent have had less than four years of such experience. If the term "country-bred" be used for those who have received

at least half of their elementary school training in the country, then only 36 per cent can be described with certainty as country-bred.

It will be noticed that 208 students are not included in this summary, for the reason that their experience was not reported. It seems probable that the chief reason for this failure to report was that few, if any, possessed such experience. There is certainly nothing to indicate that the proportion of those having had rural experience would be any higher in this group.

(b) Experience as teachers in rural schools: Out of 899 students reported in this connection 828 (92 per cent) have had none. Of the sixty-four individuals possessing such experience, forty-four had taught one year or less, ten had taught two years, six had taught three years, and the period of service of the remainder was not given.

*Discussion.*—Unfortunately the replies do not show how many of those who have taught in rural schools have also attended them as pupils. But assuming that there has been no overlapping, we still have 380 students, comprising 47 per cent of those reported, who are certainly without direct personal knowledge of country-school conditions, from the standpoint of either the teacher or the pupil. So far as overlapping occurs in the above groups, this number is correspondingly increased. It is safe to say that fully one half of the student teachers in the high-school departments of the State are lacking in this essential preparation.

#### CONCERNING PRACTICE TEACHING

*Problem.*—Country-school teaching offers certain peculiar problems of teaching and of management. In teaching, both the selection of the subject matter and the method of its presentation must be modified to suit the experience and future aims of a country child. Present courses and methods are largely city products. To readjust them to country conditions is the country teacher's problem. In management, we have the difficulties presented by an ungraded room, small classes, many and brief recitations, the simultaneous conducting of a recitation and supervising of the study room, and complete responsibility as to discipline and conduct.



Such responsibilities require a specific preparation on the part of those who are to bear them. Actual experience in rural schools seems almost indispensable, but is lacking in fully 50 per cent of our prospective rural teachers. Where it is lacking, certainly the training course should offer an efficient substitute. And even where it is present, the training department should supplement that experience by giving to the student a wider knowledge and higher ideals of country life. How nearly do the training departments in Minnesota measure up to these demands?

*Rules of the High School Board.*—"Each student shall devote one-fourth day or its full equivalent to practice teaching. . . . Work must be pursued in the training department for the full school year of nine months." Counting five hours as a school day, a school year would then include 225 hours of practice teaching. "The organization of an ungraded model school is encouraged. . . . The daily program should be framed as a model for a rural school. . . . The model school shall in no case be constituted one of the grade rooms of the school so as to dispense with the services of the regular teacher."<sup>18</sup>

*Data from the questionnaire.*—(a) Twenty-six schools (27 per cent) report that backward pupils, both dull and delayed, constitute their chief material for practice work. Twenty-eight more (29 per cent) describe them as a large factor. As one teacher puts it: "We are asked to help the backward pupils in their weakest subjects." The ungraded room seems frequently to be made up of this sort of material. Of the twenty-six schools which work chiefly upon backward children, sixteen have the ungraded practice room. One teacher writes: "We work on backward pupils in the model room and on pupils of differing capabilities in the grades." Several teachers, in another connection, object to the establishment of ungraded rooms in their departments because "they would be made up of delinquents from all the grades."

(b) Thirty-seven schools (38 per cent) now possess an ungraded practice room; eight (8 per cent) have had one but have discontinued it for different reasons; twelve more (12 per cent) are planning to establish one in the near future. Thirty-seven of the teachers who neither possess the room nor plan to develop it

<sup>18</sup> *High School Board Rules*, Minnesota Department of Education, Bul. No. 45, pp. 19 and 25.

express their belief that it would be a help to their departments. Only nine profess to believe that it would not.

That the fears of the few who oppose the plan are largely groundless is apparent from the fact that, of the forty-five schools which now have or have had the ungraded room, thirty-six (80 per cent) report it as successful, while only six (13 per cent) declare it to be a failure. Many describe it as very successful. One teacher writes that it is "one of the most successful things that we have tried"; another that "both teachers and pupils take great delight in it." Still another believes that it "furnishes the only chance for practice in discipline and system."

Doubtless one great defect in these ungraded rooms in Minnesota is their use of backward pupils for practice purposes. To this fact is probably due much of the opposition which now exists against them. But the use of such pupils is not necessary. In fact, the best training supervisors refuse to admit more than a small proportion of backward children, and insist that the room be made truly representative of a rural school. Where this is done, unless local conditions are peculiar, the desirability of the ungraded room can hardly be questioned.

(c) Thirty-five schools (36 per cent) report regular practice teaching in actual rural schools; ten more plan to begin such teaching shortly. Nine others furnish regular observation. Seventeen secure such practice irregularly by substituting when vacancies occur. Twenty-nine report no such work. Two fail to report at all.

As to the amount of this practice, four report less than a week, twenty-five report one week, eleven report two weeks, one reports one month, and one says "two weeks to a month." The others give diverse and unclassifiable replies, but in all cases the amount is small.

Eleven schools have both the ungraded room and rural practice, twenty-six more have the ungraded room, and another twenty-four a short practice period in the country.

(d) The reports show great diversity as to the amount of time given to practice teaching. As shown above, 225 hours is the minimum according to the rules of the High School Board. The following table shows the number of hours a year reported by the different schools.

2 schools report less than 100 hours
4 schools report from 100 to 149 hours
12 schools report from 150 to 199 hours
7 schools report from 200 to 224 hours
15 schools report from 225 to 249 hours
17 schools report from 250 to 299 hours
6 schools report from 300 to 349 hours
12 schools report from 350 to 399 hours
4 schools report more than 400 hours

The following shows the number of months over which the training is reported to have extended. Nine months are required by the rules of the High School Board.

1 school reports 10 months
67 schools report 9 months
2 schools report 8½ months
7 schools report 8 months
1 school reports 7 months
1 school reports 5 months

*Discussion.*—We may here raise the question, is the practice teaching conducted primarily in the interests of the rural schools, or in the interests of the schools which maintain the training departments? No doubt in the majority of cases the real purpose of such practice, i. e., the preparation of efficient rural teachers, is conscientiously adhered to. But in many cases it would appear that the quality of the work is seriously affected by the apparent interests of the schools which maintain the departments. In some cases they seem to be used to reconstruct defective or delinquent material. One superintendent told the writer that he regarded his department as chiefly serviceable in this way. It is probable that his is not an isolated case. Again, in other cases the real needs of the departments, such as an ungraded room, are not met, because to meet them would interfere, or seem to interfere, with the unity of program or harmony of spirit of the town or city system.

Doubtless these difficulties are to some extent inherent in the plan of asking city or village schools to perform this service. From one point of view it seems unfair to ask that a town school should risk its own interests in order to serve more effectively the interests of its rural neighbors. But from another point of view

no town school has the right to accept funds from the State for the maintenance of rural teachers' training courses unless it is willing to make those courses as efficient as they can be made. Furthermore, most of the schools find it possible to use other than backward pupils as practice material, and to give the full amount of practice teaching required under the rules of the High School Board; and many find it also possible to maintain an ungraded practice room or to furnish practice in actual rural schools. Few of these schools report that these features interfere in the least degree with the giving of their best service to their own constituents.

#### CONCERNING THE STUDY OF RURAL SOCIAL PROBLEMS

*Problem.*—If actual experience with rural life is generally lacking among the students, and our data indicate that it is, just what are the departments doing to furnish a substitute? To turn a town-bred girl into a rural community without some preparation for the many strange things that she must encounter is to assure her early discouragement and ultimate failure in many cases. What preparation for these things do the departments offer?

*Data from the questionnaire.*—Three schools out of the ninety-five consulted report what seems to be a formal study of rural social problems.

Forty-one schools state that these matters are taken up informally and occasionally, but apparently without system. In twenty-four of these schools reading assignments are made to recent literature on rural life,<sup>19</sup> and supplemented in many cases by reports of visits to country schools, rural meetings, and entertainments. Such a method, if consistently pursued, would seem to be effective. Talks by the county superintendent, the training supervisor, the teacher of agriculture, and others, are mentioned. One teacher reports the use of a question-box once a week. As a rule these informal discussions occur during the period devoted to general exercises.

Forty schools report an incidental discussion of these ques-

<sup>19</sup> The books most frequently used are the following, here given in the order of preference indicated by the numbers of teachers mentioning each: Carney, *Country Life and the Country School*; Wray, *Jean Mitchell's School*; McKeever, *Farm Boys and Girls*; Kern, *Among Country Schools*; Borass, *Getting Along in Country Schools*; Focht, *The American Rural School*; Fields, *The Corn Lady*.

tions in connection with the regular subjects, at opportune times, or whenever such questions are raised by the class. This method is even less systematic than the one described above. A great variety of subjects is named, in connection with which this incidental instruction is given. Among them are agriculture, hygiene and sanitation, nature study, civics, composition, management, reading, arithmetic, and geography. Some seem very remote from "social problems."

But is a course in the study of rural social problems regarded by the training teachers as desirable, as one promising to perform a practical service? Three teachers state their belief that it would not be practical; eighty teachers declare more or less emphatically that it would; seven give a conditional affirmative. Among the different replies are these: "decidedly so"; "of prime importance"; "a course that should be introduced systematically." On the other hand, several of those favoring the work in itself believe that it should be made an incidental part of a course of study that is already overcrowded.

*Discussion.*—The study of rural life and social matters in the departments seems to be very meager, in consideration of the great lack of country experience among the students. In practically every school the work is informal or incidental. The informal procedure described by many of the schools is commendable if enough is made of it, but the incidental method has little to recommend it. Incidental teaching is too likely to be no teaching at all. Again, many of the subjects mentioned as being the vehicles of this incidental teaching are so remote from social problems as to raise a doubt whether the teacher making the reply really got the meaning of the question. It is safe to say that only a small proportion of the departments offer work of real value along this line.

A natural and apparently reasonable objection to including a study of modern rural social problems in the course of study is that the average student in these departments is too young to profit by it. But what then? Are the rural schools of Minnesota to drop out of the movement to meet more closely the needs of rural life? Or shall the rural teaching force of the State be recruited from outside the high-school departments? Such a dilemma confronts the advocates of this objection.

## CONCERNING THE TRAINING SUPERVISORS

*Problem.*—"As is the teacher, so is the school." It is a frequent remark among the school men of the State that these departments are "just what the training teachers make them." Such is the latitude granted by the High School Board that the training teacher has a large part in determining nearly every feature of the work. Subject matter, program, method—these are largely at her discretion, with the result that there is much variety in all three. This liberty is excellent if the supervisor is thoroughly experienced and properly prepared. Let us examine in detail this experience and preparation.

*The rules of the High School Board* are, in effect, that certificates shall be granted only to teachers of approved experience, who seem to have special fitness, who have a knowledge of rural-school conditions, and who furnish a satisfactory certificate or diploma.

*Data from the questionnaire.*—(a) Experience as pupils in country schools: Data were received for ninety-two teachers, who were distributed as follows:

Years' experience	Number	Percentage of those reporting
None .....	37	40
Less than one year.....	5	17
One year .....	6	
Two years .....	4	
Three years .....	1	
Four years .....	2	41
Five years .....	4	
Six years .....	4	
Seven years .....	7	
Eight years .....	16	2
More than eight .....	4	
Indefinite .....	2	

It thus appears that fully 40 per cent of the teachers who reply have had no such experience, and that only 41 per cent can be described as "country-bred."

(b) Experience as teachers in rural schools: Again ninety-two teachers report as follows:<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Of these, fifty-two teachers had all and six had part of this experience in Minnesota, while thirty-one had part or all of it outside of the State.

Years' experience	Number
None .....	6
Less than a year .....	2
One year .....	20
Two years .....	19
Three years .....	14
Four years .....	12
Five years .....	9
Six years .....	4
Seven years .....	4
Eight years .....	2

(c) Total rural experience: Found by adding together the years spent as pupil and as teacher, by each supervisor, in the rural schools.

Years' experience	Number
None .....	2
Less than a year .....	3
One year .....	11
Two years .....	10
Three years .....	8
Four years .....	7
Five years .....	7
Six years .....	5
Seven years .....	5
Eight years .....	5
Nine years .....	5
Ten years .....	7
Eleven years .....	1
Twelve years .....	4
Thirteen years .....	4
Fourteen years .....	3
Fifteen years .....	0
Sixteen years .....	1
Doubtful .....	2

From these tables it appears that the great majority of the training supervisors have had sufficient rural experience to be acquainted with rural conditions as they are, or were. Let us now see to what extent this experience has been supplemented by proper training.

(d) Amount of normal school, college, or university training received by the supervisors above a four-year high-school course.

In making these compilations half years were not counted. Returns were received from ninety-four teachers.

Years of training	Number reporting
None .....	0
Less than a year .....	5
One year .....	13
Two years .....	36
Three years .....	13
Four years .....	18
Five years .....	5
Six years .....	1
Doubtful .....	3

It will be observed that eighteen teachers (19 per cent) have had less than the equivalent of a two-year normal-school course, and that sixty-seven teachers (71 per cent) have had less than the equivalent of a four-year college course.

(e) Sources of this advanced training: It is worth while to know what institutions in the State have had a part in furnishing this preparation. In the table below the numbers in the columns headed "all," "most," and "part" indicate the numbers of teachers who have received all, most, or part of their preparation in the institutions named.

Institutions	All	Most	Part
University College of Education .....	7	2	13
Moorhead Normal .....	9	4	1
Winona Normal .....	7	3	3
Mankato Normal .....	13	5	4
St. Cloud Normal .....	5	0	2
Duluth Normal .....	2	0	0
Colleges .....	5	0	1

Normal schools thus seem to be the chief factor in the preparation of those teachers who have received their training in this State. The same statement holds for those who were trained elsewhere. The situation may be summarized by saying that nine teachers (9 per cent) have had all or most of their training in a standard university, seventy-four teachers (79 per cent) in normal schools, and ten teachers (10 per cent) in small colleges.

(f) Date of this advanced training: It is important, as will appear in the discussion, to know when this training was re-



ceived. Such a period is very difficult to fix in most cases, because the work has been done piecemeal. Two columns are arranged below; the one headed "bulk" means that the most continuous part of the course was completed during the periods indicated; the one headed "last" shows the number of teachers who have had no training since the date indicated by their place in the column.

	Bulk	Last
Before 1890 .....	4	3
1890-1899 .....	9	6
1900-1904 .....	12	9
1905-1909 .....	41	28
1910-1913 .....	25	45

This table may be read as follows: "Four teachers completed the bulk of their preparation before 1890, and three have had none since; nine teachers completed the bulk of theirs between 1890 and 1899, and six have had none since, etc."

(g) Special preparation for rural-school work: A question of more immediate importance than the amount, period, or place of this post-high-school training is, did it include any work bearing directly on the problems of rural education?

Nineteen teachers make no reply to this question, fifty answer in the negative, and twenty in the affirmative. Seven describe the work received by them as incidental or indirect. Only a very few courses are mentioned in any case, and nearly all were taken outside of the State.

*Discussion.*—The question here is, to what extent are the supervisors of practice teaching fitted by their experience and training to supervise the preparation of teachers for rural schools?

So far as experience with country schools is concerned, that of most of the supervisors is very fair, and of many is excellent. While only 41 per cent are country-bred in that they have attended country schools for four years or more, all but eight have had at least one year's teaching experience in the country, and a large number have had much more. No fault can be found with this part of the record of most of our training supervisors; on the contrary, it is highly commendable.

But country experience, while an important part, is after all only a part of a normal teacher's training. In addition, she should

have a good general education beyond the high school, and besides the usual teacher's preparatory course she should have made a special professional study of rural teaching. Furthermore, this professional study should have been recent enough to bring her into direct touch with modern rural movements.

From these points of view the attainments of our training supervisors leave something to be desired. A normal-school course, reported by approximately 75 per cent of the teachers as their chief and by 60 per cent as their sole training, is good, but should be extended into a full college course of four years. Those who supervise the training of our rural teachers should be in no wise inferior in point of general culture to those who prepare our teachers for the town. But what is more important, the professional training should include a much greater amount of work bearing on the conduct of these particular departments, and on rural education. The professional preparation of the present supervisors has looked almost entirely to graded-school work. This appears to be its gravest defect. The rural-school experience of these teachers, extensive as it is, can not take the place of such specific training, for the reason that this experience gives only a knowledge of what rural schools are, or were, and not of what they ought to be.

Furthermore, there have been recently very rapid developments in our ideas of rural education, particularly since the publication of the report of the Roosevelt Country Life Commission in 1909.<sup>21</sup> But it has been shown that forty-six teachers (48 per cent) report no academic or professional work since that date, and that sixty-six teachers (70 per cent) had finished the greater part of their preparation before that time. The evidence clearly shows that the majority of the supervisors need a broader academic training and a much more specific professional preparation.

One of the most urgent needs in Minnesota at the present time is the establishment at some state teachers' training institution of a thorough course for the professional training of these departmental supervisors. Such a course, in addition to the usual professional work offered to the regular grade teacher, should include a careful study of rural-life problems and of rural pedagogy. A model rural school should be provided to exemplify

<sup>21</sup> *Report of the Commission on Country Life*; 60th Congress, 2d Session, Senate doc. No. 705. Also reprinted by Sturgis and Walton, New York, 1911.

ideal conditions and afford proper teaching practice, such as the schools now found in connection with state institutions in Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, and elsewhere. The writer has had the privilege of visiting two such schools, and to him they opened visions of a new era in country teaching.

CONCERNING THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF RURAL TEACHING

*Problem.*—Among the many things entering into the professionalizing of rural teaching is the establishment of a more or less permanent corps of teachers with a respectable amount of academic preparation. What are some of the actual tendencies in this respect?

*Data from the questionnaire.*—(a) Tendency toward feminization: The normal departments threaten almost completely to feminize the country teaching force. Of the 1,079 students included in the returns, thirty-one were males and 1,048 were females. Ninety-seven per cent were women. This feminization is in line with the tendency in the State since 1900, as shown by the following data compiled from the reports of the state superintendent.

Year	Percentage of male teachers in common schools
1900	22½
1901	21
1902	19
1903	17
1904	16½
1905	No data
1906	14½
1907	12½
1908	11
1909	10½
1910	10
1911	9
1912	8½

The influence of this tendency upon the permanency of the teaching corps is doubtful. But according to Coffman<sup>22</sup> the women teachers the country over are making greater profes-

<sup>22</sup> Coffman, L. D., *Social Composition of the Teaching Population*, Columbia University Contributions to Education, No. 41.

sional development than are the men. If this be true for rural teachers, this tendency toward feminization is not wholly bad.

(b) Increase in amount of academic training: It is estimated that at the beginning of the activities of the training departments the rural teaching force of the State was about equally divided among those teachers who were high-school graduates, those who possessed some high-school training, and those with none at all. The status of the 1,055 students whose academic position was reported in this study was as follows:

Amount of regular high-school training when department is completed	Number of students
None .....	7
One year .....	11
Two years .....	100
Three years .....	98
Four years .....	839

Thus 79 per cent of this group will be high-school graduates, and all but seven will have had some high-school training when they finish the departments. The sending into the rural schools each year of a group of teachers with such a training must soon improve conditions there in this respect. But it will be observed that 21 per cent will not rank as high-school graduates when their work in the departments is completed.

(c) Teaching history of former graduates: Data were secured regarding the graduates of the classes of 1910, 1911, and 1912. The 1913 class was inadvertently omitted.

	1910	1911	1912
Number of graduates reported	373	678	767
Number now teaching.....	234	495	617
Number now in rural schools (both common and semi- graded) .....	224(60%)	481(71%)	613(80%)
Number now in graded schools	10	14	4
Number who did not teach..	40	68	87
Number who quit teaching..	94	96	42
Unknown .....	4	19	21

It thus appears that 60 per cent of the 1910 class, 71 per cent of the 1911 class, and 80 per cent of the 1912 class were still in rural teaching at the time when this study was made. If the number of those who did not teach be subtracted from the total num-

ber in each class, the percentages of those who remained in rural work after once beginning it are increased to 67, 79, and 90, respectively, for the different classes. Sixty-seven per cent of those who began in rural schools were still in that work after nearly four years had elapsed. This is not a bad record.

*Discussion.*—At the present time one can speak only in a prophetic way of a real "rural teaching profession." This statement has nation-wide application. Coffman, in the study cited above, describes the rural and small village schools as laboratories for the trying-out and polishing-off of raw pedagogical material.

Undoubtedly the departments are doing much to promote a higher professionalism. Their contributions in this direction may be summarized as follows:

(a) They have raised the standard of academic preparation among the rural teachers of the State.

(b) They have furnished a corps of teachers who promise to give rather extended service to rural work.

(c) They have, by their insistence on the reviews of the common branches, sent into the schools teachers more thoroughly informed in the subjects which they must teach.

(d) However one may be inclined to criticize the present methods of practice teaching, they are far more valuable than none at all, and have produced hundreds of young teachers who, while still amateurs, are far from being novices in the work. In this way they have given to the students a first-hand knowledge of children, and many methods and devices of immeasurable value.

(e) They have established in their product a professional enthusiasm toward teaching in general, if not toward rural teaching. Many training supervisors have remarked to the writer that their students were showing a growing interest in state normal courses and other means of professional preparation.

### III. SUMMARY

The results of the preceding study probably redound more to the credit than to the discredit of the departments. While several desirable features are shown to be imperfectly developed, yet it is a matter for congratulation that so much has actually been

accomplished. However, it is possible to recognize the advantages and attainments of the plan without blinding oneself to its deficiencies. The writer has attempted in the foregoing study to establish the following propositions:

1. The course of study is to too great an extent dependent upon the initiative of the training supervisors. The result is a lack both of proper readjustment of the older subjects to rural conditions, and of new subject matter peculiar to rural life.

2. The students in the departments, who are the prospective rural teachers of the State, are sadly lacking in rural-school and rural-life experience. Fully 50 per cent have never attended or taught a rural school, and only 36 per cent have had half or more of their elementary school work in the country.

3. Backward children are too large a factor in the practice work, when 27 per cent of the schools give most, and another 29 per cent give a great part, of their attention to such material.

4. There are too few ungraded practice rooms and there is too little practice in actual rural schools. Eleven schools have both, twenty-six more have the ungraded room alone, and another twenty-four have an all too short practice period in the country. Both agencies are needed in every school to offset the great lack of country-school experience.

5. On account of the dearth of country-life experience among the students, the present amount of attention given to the study of social and other problems of the rural community is far too small.

6. The training supervisors, while possessing a satisfactory rural-school experience in most cases, show a deficiency in training, as regards its recency, its quantity, and its specific relation to the work in which they are now engaged.

7. While the departments seem to be tending toward a greater feminization of the rural teaching force, they are providing a corps of teachers with increasing academic training, and one which promises fair permanency in the profession.

## APPENDIX A: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

### A. STUDENTS IN TRAINING DEPARTMENTS

1. How many young women in class of 1913-14?.....  
 How many young men in class of 1913-14?.....
2. In columns (b) and (c) below, state number of young women and young men, respectively, who have completed, preliminary to normal training, the amount of high-school work indicated in column (a).
 

Column (a)	Column (b), Girls	Column (c), Boys
(1) None	.....	.....
(2) Less than a year	.....	.....
(3) 1 to 2 years	.....	.....
(4) 2 to 3 years	.....	.....
(5) 3 to 4 years	.....	.....
(6) High-school graduates	.....	.....
3. State length of rural experience, *in years*, for each student having such experience (e. g., 1 yr., 2 yrs., 3 yrs., etc.).
  - (a) As pupils:
  - (b) As teachers:

(Note: State number having none, in each case.)
4. Résumé of former classes:
 

	1910	1911	1912
(a) Number students	.....	.....	.....
(b) Now teaching	.....	.....	.....
(c) In rural schools	.....	.....	.....
(d) Semi-graded schools	.....	.....	.....
(e) Graded schools	.....	.....	.....
(f) Did not teach	.....	.....	.....
(g) Quit teaching	.....	.....	.....
5. Of the present class of students, how many contemplate for the present
  - (a) Rural-school teaching? .....
  - (b) Semi-graded teaching? .....
  - (c) Not teaching? .....

### B. COURSE OF STUDY FOR STUDENTS

1. State course of study required of students during year of training
  - (a) Practice teaching: Hours a week..... Months.....
  - (b) Observation of teaching: Hours a week..... Months.....
  - (c) Theory of teaching: Hours a week..... Months.....
  - (d) What special subjects are reviewed?
  - (e) What other work is required, if any?
2. Does your course of study include a special course in the social problems of rural education?
 

If so, describe course:

3. If not, do you find opportunity to bring in such instruction in connection with other subjects?

Describe:

4. Do you consider such a course of practical value to the student proposing to teach in rural schools?

#### C. PRACTICE TEACHING

1. State average size of class under charge of each student.
2. Do your students practice chiefly on backward pupils (or on classes of pupils of differing capabilities)?
3. Do your students get any opportunity for practice teaching in actual rural schools?  
How much?
4. Do you at present possess an ungraded practice room?
5. Have you had such a room?  
Was it successful?  
If not, why not?
6. Are you planning definitely to provide such a room?
7. Do you personally believe such a room would be a benefit to your department?
8. What plan, if any, do you consider better?

#### D. TEACHERS

1. How much academic training have you had beyond a high-school course? (State in years.)  
Where taken?  
When?
2. How much professional training in education have you had?  
Where?  
When?
3. Did this professional training include any courses bearing directly on the problems of rural teaching?  
Give specific names of such courses.  
Where taken?  
When?
4. Have you had any experience in rural-school work?
 

(a) As pupil? .....	How long?.....
(b) As teacher? .....	} How long?.....
	} Where?.....



## APPENDIX B: BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

(Prepared by Assistant Professor SAMUEL QUIGLEY)

During the last two or three years publications on every aspect of rural advancement have multiplied with astonishing rapidity. Rural economics, rural sociology, and every phase of rural education have been treated in books, pamphlets, and periodicals. Scores of reports and surveys have accumulated until only indifference can be responsible for the ignorance of those who are still lacking information and inspiration relative to the renaissance in rural-life interests.

A few of the more valuable of these works are described below.

Carney, Mabel, *Country Life and the Country School*. Row, Peterson and Company, Chicago. 1912. \$1.25.

This book is a comprehensive and careful analysis of the several agencies of rural progress and of the social relationship of the school to the community. In addition to the excellent treatment of a wide range of topics in the body of the book, the publication affords an invaluable appendix which suggests a course of study for country-school teachers, a course in sociology, plans for school buildings, furnishings and equipment for country schools, aids for social center work, a country-school program, seat work, pictures and literature and music for the country, etc., and a carefully selected bibliography.

Eggleston and Bruer, *The Work of the Rural School*. Harper and Brothers, New York. 1913. \$1.00.

This book is distinctly inspirational and suggestive. At the same time the chapters are concrete and give valuable details. It will help the teacher to vitalize her class work as well as to develop a better appreciation of some of the problems of school government and administration.

Gillette, John M., *Constructive Rural Sociology*. Sturgis and Walton Company, New York. 1913. \$1.60.

This book comes strictly within the comprehension of the average teacher. It is thoroughly practical and will help the teacher to construct a working background for her position of leadership in the country.

Field, Jessie, *The Corn Lady*. A. Flanagan and Company, Chicago. 1911. 50 cents.

The letters of a country teacher to her father. The book is helpful in a concrete way toward a better interpretation of the course of study. It suggests ways of vitalizing school work.

Kern, O. J., *Among Country Schools*. Ginn and Company, Boston. 1906. \$1.50.

This book deals with country-school problems from the teacher's viewpoint, and is especially emphatic in its advocacy of improved school surroundings.

Hart, Joseph K., *Educational Resources of Village and Rural Communities*. The Macmillan Company, Chicago. 1913. \$1.00.

The title well describes the purpose and character of this excellent source book. The chapters do not so much furnish material in detail as they give suggestions that may lead to effective local surveys. The bibliographies are excellent.

Charters, W. W., *Teaching the Common Branches*. Houghton, Mifflin Company, Boston, New York, Chicago. 1913. \$1.35.

This book ought to help the pedagogy of the teachers of the so-called common branches. In a refreshingly simple and common-sense treatment it touches upon the motive, method, and mechanics that make instruction in the common branches effective.

Cubberley, Elwood P., *Rural Life and Education*. Houghton, Mifflin Company. 1914. \$1.50 net.

This is an important book. It treats in a comprehensive way the various aspects of the rural-school problem as a phase of the rural-life problem. It is easy in style, and scientifically accurate. The chapters are followed by lists of topics for supplementary discussion, and the book closes with a good short bibliography.

Betts and Hall, *Better Rural Schools*. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1914. \$1.25 net.

This is a good book for the teacher. It covers practically every aspect of the movement for better rural schools. It is profusely illustrated, and it gives numerous actual examples of the better way. Its treatment of the subject of consolidation is one of the best in print.

#### Bulletins and Reports.

Every training department should have access to recent N. E. A. reports, to the educational bibliographies and publications issued by the Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C., to the publications of the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and to the bulletins issued by the Agricultural College of the University of Minnesota, St. Anthony Park, St. Paul, Minn.



